

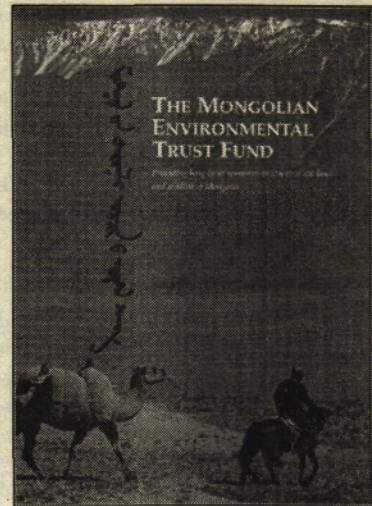


## Trust Fund gets in gear

The Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund (METF) is now legally established. The fund office has the financial support of UNDP and the Government of Mongolia. This fund aims to fund projects which would contribute to the conservation and permanent management of the land, its natural resources including the diverse ecosystem.

The first meeting of the board of directors of the METF was held the second week of January, where the President and the Vice-President of the METF were elected and the activities for 1998 were discussed. Dr. Z. Batjargal, ex-Minister for nature and the environment, and Mr. Douglas Gardner, Resident Coordinator of the UN, have been elected as the President and the Vice-President of the METF.

The board of directors consists of nine members including minister Tsagaan, minister Adysuren and others.



## Youth-21 Conference and Ecoforum draws over 170 delegates and creates wave of excitement

By David Sadoway, MAP-21 PIU

"Is it possible to balance ecological protection with economic growth? What is today's number one social issue in Mongolia for young people? What is your dream for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Mongolia?" These questions challenged delegates at the first ever Youth Conference on sustainable development that took place this past February 4-7<sup>th</sup> at Ulaanbaatar's Youth Cultural Palace.

The Mongolian government declared 1998, "Year of Mongolian Youth" and this was the first major event in line with the declaration. "This is open, interactive approach is new for Mongolia", said Prime Minister Enkhbayar, as delegates



presented him with a listing of their priority problems, along with 15 pilot proposals.

Over 170 youth delegates from 21 aimags and members of the general public heard over 30 key speakers, including the President, Parliament Speaker, Prime Minister, UN Resident Coordinator and Minister of Nature and Environment.

Besides hearing speakers' ideas, attendees

were encouraged to take control of their future in a participatory exercise involving 15 brainstorming subgroups led by trained youth facilitators. Subgroups met to list the key social, ecological and economic issues facing the nation today. Many groups identified "education reform, poverty, air pollution and lack of jobs", as the number one issues affecting their lives.

Groups were challenged to craft specific solutions and pilot projects to help resolve the many problems. One group decided community toilets and public showers would help solve serious sewage and sanitary problems in Mongolia's ger communities.

Another group proposed a "chess board scheme for combating desertification", in Bayanhongor aimag. Their approach would see eco-teams planting stabilizing vegetation. There was also a suggestion for a "Green Cities Programme". It envisioned pollution reduction, ecological restoration and job creation for unemployed youth.

(cont. on page 4)

## Update on HIV/AIDS prevention activities

By Nicholas Bates,  
HIV/AIDS Health Adviser

As the issue still remains a hot one in Mongolia, different groups express their wish to be involved in these activities. Recently, two student groups approached the HIV/AIDS/STD project team wanting to conduct HIV activities. These groups are encouraged to amalgamate and form a student's AIDS Club, which was launched at the TOP-10 disco on Friday, January 16. Copies of the Mongolian AIDS Bulletin (a United Nations-funded magazine) were distributed at the launch as were lubricated condoms (kindly supplied by UNFPA).

Short speeches were made on AIDS prevention by the project team members and a game was played with patrons of the disco.

Similarly, other groups initiated interesting activities. For instance, a group of actors approached the project with the idea of

(cont. on page 2)

## Contents:

- Trust Fund gets in gear
- Youth 21 - Conference and Ecoforum
- HIV/AIDS update
- Coffee and economy
- News in a flash
- In the field
- UN Secretary General's letter to the President of Mongolia
- Up close and personal
- Arrivals/departures
- UN mission to the country

## News in a flash

By the beginning of February the UN agencies in Mongolia will have set up a working group on the activities of the year to support and to contribute to the activities already planned by the Government of Mongolia. In these activities UNICEF will take a leading role.

Already the UN has supported the Youth 21 conference in early February. Other plans include supporting young journalists.

UNDP's Blue Bag Project picked up kudos from Mongolian Environment Minister Mr. Adyasuran at a December exhibition. According to Ms. Davasuren, National Project Coordinator for UNDP's Environmental Public Awareness Programme (EPAP), Adyasuran "was really interested in the Blue Bag Project and is planning to visit the project and encourage all the people to be involved in such an activity." The Blue Bag Project helps women from poor households to organize small recycling businesses.

The comments were made at the exhibition marking the 10th anniversary of the Ministry of Nature and the Environment. Held at the National Museum, EPAP showed off its impressive range of awareness-raising materials - from brochures to calendars to cards and posters.

"The exhibition was visited by the Prime Minister, parliamentarians, government officials and schoolchildren," said Davasuren. "The exhibition played its role in helping to raise public awareness on the activities of the ministry and other environment projects. People learned a lot."

A group of local self-governance authority representatives from six aimags (Sukhbaatar, Khovd, Khuvsugul, Uvurkhangai, Tuv and Dundgov), parliamentarians and other government officials visited Sweden at the beginning of February for a study tour under Capacity Building for Self Governance Project (SIDA, cost-shared by UNDP). The study tour co-funded by UNDP and the Government of Sweden looks forward to familiarize the local rural chairmen with the experience of commune management in Sweden.

Where the Steppe Meets the Internet  
Sustainable Development in Mongolia  
United Nations Homepage: [www.unmongolia.mn](http://www.unmongolia.mn)  
E-mail: [govt@unmongolia.mn](mailto:govt@unmongolia.mn)

## The UN Secretary General's letter to the President of Mongolia

On Human Rights Day, 10 December 1997, we launch a year in which the rights guaranteed to every member of our human family will be a central theme for the United Nations and the international community. The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Five-year implementation Review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action from the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 challenge us to renew and strengthen our commitment to human rights.

The cause of human rights is at the core of the mission of the United Nations. I should like to call on you to support the global effort to reinvigorate the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights, which has developed over the past 50 years. The endeavour of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to mainstream human rights into United Nations activities system-wide will be an important part of our contribution to the anniversary year.

Much remains to be done to ensure that the goals of the Universal Declaration are realized for every individual, but I am confident that the international community will respond to this challenge in a spirit of mutual respect and solidarity. We need greater efforts at the international and national levels to prevent conflicts, eradicate poverty, and empower people through human rights, democracy, and development.

I call on Governments to take appropriate measures to turn solemn commitments into concrete actions for the betterment of all people. I encourage Governments that have not done so to sign and ratify outstanding human rights treaties, and to develop national plans of action to promote greater respect for human rights. Let us complete universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and work with determination for universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the year 2000, as was called for by the World Conference.

Kofi A. Annan,  
UN Secretary General

(cont. from page 1)



## Mongolian NGOs give top marks to HDR

It has been over six months since the first Mongolian Human Development Report and work has started on the 1999 Report. That Report will be closer to an "action programme" according to Japanese human development expert, Professor Ryokichi Hirano. Hirano visited Ulaanbaatar on a whirlwind one-week tour early in February to gauge responses to the first report.

In a meeting between six Mongolian NGOs and Prof. Hirano, the Report received praise for doing what had never been done before: documenting the well-being of Mongolians from a human development perspective. Mr. Tuvshintogs, President of Mongolian Children Organization's Association, found the Report integrated the welfare of children very well. He would like to see the 1999 report more focused on the well-being of the family and tackle the thorny issue of herder children dropping out of school.

Ms. Gerelsuren, President of the Mongolian Women's Federation called the Report "a great contribution to human development in Mongolia" but wanted to see more detailed data on the state of women, including "what share of national wealth is held by women."

Prof. Hirano told the meeting the next report needs to present lessons learned in improving human development in Mongolia. Structurally, the 1999 report will be divided into two parts, with the first summarizing "events that have taken place in the last two years as well as the most pressing issues facing society. The second part will comprise information on the aimag level," he told local paper, The Mongol Messenger.

Prof. Hirano is the President of the Japan Society for International Development and the Chair of the Mongolian Development Policy Group of Japan. He teaches at Seikei University in Tokyo. He was instrumental in the development of the first global human development report and has visited Mongolia 25 times since 1990.

## AIDS Activities

developing short dramatic scenes showing how HIV is transmitted and the first performance was held at UFO disco; a meeting between the project team and the homosexual community in Ulaanbaatar, where the training needs of this community were ascertained.

The AIDS Foundation was launched on 23 January 1998. Several private sector and NGO organizations pledged money for the Foundation. For instance, the Mongolian Red Cross Society pledged Tg 1 million, the Olympics Committee Tg 1 million, the International Lions Club and its branch in Ulaanbaatar city pledged Tg 500,000 each. Mongolia Consulting Services donated condoms worth Tg 1 million, Tuv aimag Tg 100,000. Most impressive was the donation by miners of Shivee Gobi of a day's salary.

## In the field

### The View from the Gobi desert

#### From a filipino development worker point of view

It takes six hours or so to reach the Middle Gobi, six hours or so without any green thing, bodies of water or significant landmark in sight. I wonder how the car driver was able to find his way to our destination under these conditions. There are no zigzag roads or uphill climbs either.

Along the way, I saw several big herds of sheep, cattle and horses and small herds of camels. I wonder how such big groups of animals can survive and even multiply with just dry grass and no water. They probably have adjusted genetically under this condition, or there must be something here which keeps them going.

Looking beyond what the bare eyes can see, the greatest resource that Mongolia possess is its people, the lifeblood of every nation's development. Put in the national vision of what they want to be and you have the heart to keep development going all over the land. One can see the potentials of the Mongolians from their intricate art works, their enthusiasm to acquire new knowledge and their eagerness to meet other people who can possibly share with them something new.

The vastness of the land overwhelmed me! This is not a surprising reaction from someone coming from a small country. Land is the second biggest resource of the country. The vast potential of Mongolia's land resource is still to be tapped to improve the quality of life of its people. The hostile climate can be tamed using appropriate technology, proper timing, selection of suited crop species and varieties and a little help from some friends from different parts of the world. With lots of sunshine the whole year round, Mongolia has huge agro-industrial potentials. The people just need to be exposed to other ideas and try what will work out for them and get the less-privileged country folks into the mainstream of economic growth.

I have also noticed that eco-tourism is a budding business in the countryside. Eco-tourism can provide additional sources of income to a great number of people. But the Mongolian authorities should legislate measures to regulate the negative effects of too much commercialization of tourism to the environment and to its people.

Likewise, Mongolians should be on guard against unbalanced industrialization so as not to sacrifice the resources which they have at present just for the sake of misconceived de-

velopment. In any undertaking, people should always take into consideration what will happen in the future. We should give the next generations of Mongolians the legacy of enjoying fresh clean air and safe environment. The concept of lasting development is one, which can be passed on from one generation to another.

#### Up close and personal

Interview with Ms. Myagmarsuren, housekeeper, UNDP

**When did you start working in UNDP?**  
From 1996

**Do you see any changes at the time you started and now?**

I got used to my work. Feel more confident.

**What kind of person are you?**

I think, I am a friendly, honest person with good communication skills.

**What do you expect from people surrounding you?**

I expect them to be friendly.

**Your background?**

Bakery technologist.

**Your family?**

Married with a daughter.

**Your hobby?**

I like walking, going to the country and also doing my housework.

**What is your favorite color?**

I like dark blue color.

**Do you think you are happy? Why?**

Yes, I have a good family and job.

**How do you see your future?**

I really want to learn a foreign language, specifically, English.



#### Read about the UN in Mongolia

More and more it is becoming crucial the various agencies of the United Nations cooperate in development activities. Every year the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) for Mongolia produces a report detailing the activities of the UN. The 1997 report highlights cooperation between the UN agencies and opportunities for future cooperation. Copies of the report are available from the RCO or the United Nations Information Shop at UNDP headquarters.

#### News in a flash

Under UNDP's MAP-21 Project, which aims to define a sustainable development strategy for Mongolia in the coming century, aimag action programmes are going to be approved in February this year. These aimag action programmes will be reflecting strategic plans for developing each aimag until 2020.

Ms. Chuluunsetseg, MAP-21 Information manager said: "each aimag will develop its own action programme, reflecting and based on the specificities of each of them. This is the first time when aimags undertake such responsibility, when they are asked to look at the development from many angles: not only the economic side, but social and environmental sides as well. By adopting these action programmes, each aimag will define its direction in development."

Gachuur settlement is located about 21 km from Ulaanbaatar. One of three small pilot projects under MAP-21 is being implemented there. With the funding of US \$30,000, the Urban Sustainable Agricultural Settlement Project is to upgrade the livelihoods of the inhabitants of the settlement by protecting the environment and creating jobs.

The site was visited by all environment project managers and coordinators. Under the pilot project a straw-bale house for office use and a green house were built. In the future, the project is going to recycle waste to produce fertilizer.

Under the Asia-Pacific Development Programme, a group of government officials will attend the information, communication and technology workshop to be held in Malaysia on 23-25 February.

The regional workshop on Values and Governance in Asia is a part of UNDP's ongoing work on governance in the Asia region.

The UNDP Reference Unit is moving and getting a new name - the United Nations Information Shop. Soon to be located in the former Polish Embassy building steps away from the UNDP office, its doors will open to the public at the end of February. The development collection will be expanded and the Shop will offer more magazines for readers. It will also distribute to users all UN publications produced for Mongolia and provide a free-of-charge Internet cafe.

## "You have to taste everything for politeness"

Ms. Pie Meulenkamp, a newly-joined Danish JPO, had her first trip outside the capital recently. The joint UNDP and Poverty Alleviation Programme Office fact-finding trip was investigating opportunities for small project loans of US \$120 in Dornogovi and Dundgovi aimags. The loans are funded by the New Zealand government and are for poor female-headed households with children of preschool age. NGOs will be identified to help and supervise those women.

"This project is really to give a group of people a chance to change their situation from being hopeless to having some hope for the future," said Meulenkamp. "Hopefully, some of the women I met will benefit from this project and will have a better life than before the project. The trip allowed me to know better how tough it is. The sum is actually much bigger than I thought (five gers). I got familiar with some of the traditions and customs, like you have to taste everything for politeness."

(cont. from page 1)

Clearly many youth have problems with the present education system. "Khurd-2000" would see an introduction of social and ecological ethics into the education curriculum.



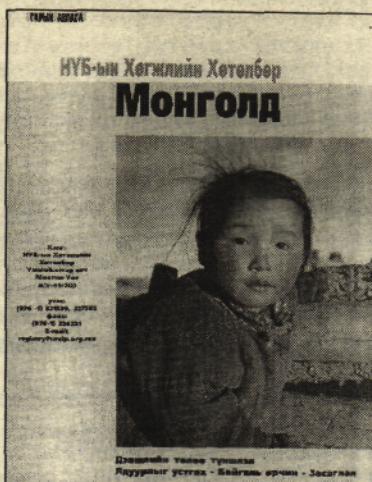
Other groups suggested less rigid, participatory education and intense training in order to combat poverty and unemployment in the beleaguered aimags.

Many delegates said they wanted to duplicate the participatory approach used in their conference when they returned to their home aimags. Tsetsgee Puntsagiin, an event organizer said "writing project proposals or business plans is a good exercise for young Mongolians. Some will likely be implemented and we expect that future proposals will be more realistic."

Around 40 NGOs and private organizations also put together exhibits, posters and information displays to accompany the conference in the expo-style, Ecoforum. Information and condoms from the UN, a scarce commodity in many of the aimags, were scooped-up by energetic delegates.

### Arrivals/Departures

**Ms. N. Saruul** joined UNDP from the Soros Foundation as Reference Unit Assistant and will be assisting with the new United Nations Information Shop; **Ms. B. Bayarma**, formerly of UNICEF, is now an NPO for the UNFPA programme; **Ms. D. Sukhjargalma** moved to UNDP from UNFPA as an NPO on the Poverty Alleviation Programme; **Mr. Rogier Gruys** joined the LAN team for a seven-month UNDP internal assignment as an Intranet project team leader; Canadian librarian **Ms. Katherine Johnson** joins the Press Institute of Mongolia as a UNV Documentalist; **Mr. Ajamdar Rai**, UNV, heading to Darkhan-Uul aimag as Family Farming Specialist; **Mr. Atsushi Yamanaka**, a Japanese JPO, Junior Programme Officer will work with the LAN team.



### UNDP projects explained in new guide

A new guide to UNDP programmes and projects will be out in February. The Guide contains brief introductory information on all UNDP-funded projects in the areas of poverty alleviation, environment and governance. The Guide is available both in English and in Mongolian. Besides detailing all UNDP projects, the guide also provides useful information on Mongolia and contact names and numbers. The information will also be mirrored on the United Nations Homepage at [www.un-mongolia.mn](http://www.un-mongolia.mn).

### Common Database on social statistics

By Kassahun D. Mekuria, UNV

Considering the advantage that will result by synchronizing the effort in data collection activities in Mongolia, and also considering the need for consistency and integrity in data collection activities, the office of the Resident Coordinator is in the process of creating a task force for establishing a common database for the United Nations System in the country. Apart from the need for integrating the effort in searching and standardizing objective data, a common data base is now becoming a prerequisite for the general trend in developing a single development assistance framework. Among others, the main objective of the recent trend in developing a single framework is to strengthen and/or create a more effective cooperation among the UN system, opening a new era for a more integrated response to the country's need. The process leads to an establishment of a single United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The process of preparing the UNDAF will commence with the preparation of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), a joint needs assessment tool. The CCA is a common set of indicators at the country level that would form a basis for planning and programming activity and create a common information base for the activities of the UN funds and programmes.

### Coffee and economy

Under UNDP's Think Tank Project, an Economic Club was established at the beginning of February. The main objective of the club is to study and identify the issues of Mongolian national development policy and strategy, and furthermore to provide the Government of Mongolia with professional support in formulating national economic policy. Mr. Tserendorj, National Project Coordinator, noted that "the economic club is designed in the way that different level people - decision-makers, politicians, journalists, economists - can share their ideas and debate development issues. This is, in my opinion, a timely event to direct and guide the development of the country to the same direction. The first debate will take place in February." The club consists of a chairman (Minister of Finance, Mr. Tsagaan), vice-chairman (Senior Adviser to the Prime Minister), 26 members and honorary members, including the President, Speaker of the Parliament, Prime Minister, UN Resident Coordinator and others.

We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words.

The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published on the first of every month. The next deadline for submissions is the 18 of each month. All submissions must be sent to B. Zoltuya, Information Assistant, c/o B. Elbegzaya,

UNDP, 7 Erkhoo street, Ulaanbaatar, POBox 49/207.

Telephone: (976-1) 321539. Fax: (976-1) 326221. E-mail: [registry@undp.org.mn](mailto:registry@undp.org.mn)

Please check out the United Nations Homepage at [www.un-mongolia.mn](http://www.un-mongolia.mn). Subscriptions to the newsletter are free! We can send the newsletter to you electronically, via e-mail, or by post. Just send us your address and how you would like to receive the newsletter and we will rush it out straight away.

Blue Sky Bulletin